

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 12-14 without prejudice to or disclaimer of their subject matter.

Please amend Claims 2, 5 and 8-11, as follows. All claims in the application are being reproduced below in accordance with current U.S. Patent and Trademark Office requirements.

Claim 1 (Cancelled).

2. (Currently Amended) The A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;  
detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application of the external force, by a detector; and  
determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal obtained from the detector, ~~according to claim 1~~, wherein the external force is applied by bringing an external force application means into contact with the sheet material from a non-contact state between the external force application means and the sheet material.

Claims 3 and 4 (Cancelled).

5. (Currently Amended) The A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;  
detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application of the external force, by a detector; and  
determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal obtained from the detector, ~~according to claim 1~~; wherein the external force is applied in a state where the sheet material is standing still.

Claims 6 and 7 (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) The A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;  
detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application of the external force, by a detector; and  
determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal obtained from the detector, ~~according to claim 1~~; wherein double feed is determined from frequency components of vibration detected by the detector depending on the application of the external force.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;  
detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application of the external force, by a detector; and  
determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal obtained from the detector, ~~according to claim 1~~; wherein when the external force is an impact applied by an impact applicator, double feed is determined from an interval between a plurality of peaks of voltage generated from the detector by several times of recoil of the impact applicator.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;  
detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application of the external force, by a detector; and  
determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal obtained from the detector, ~~according to claim 1~~; wherein the external force is an impact.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A double feed detection method for detecting whether sheet materials are double fed, comprising the steps of:  
applying an external force to a sheet material;

detecting a force obtained from the sheet material depending on the application  
of the external force, by a detector; and

determining whether the sheet materials are double fed based on a signal  
obtained from the detector, according to claim 1, wherein the external force is a vibration.

Claims 12-14 (Cancelled).